

VZCZCXRO1530
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #6723 3551614
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 211614Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0391
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006723

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/20/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S OPPOSITION MULLS EARLY ELECTION OPTIONS
AS LATEST MANEUVER IN PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b),
(d)

11. (C) Summary. In an end-of-year push, Turkey's opposition parties and staunchly secular president are calling for early elections as the latest maneuver in Turkey's presidential sweepstakes. Their options to block PM Erdogan or his candidate from seizing the presidency next May are limited, given the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) comfortable parliamentary majority. Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal today backed off from the most recent scheme to organize a mass walk-out by his deputies to trigger an early vote, but pledged to continue to work for early elections. PM Erdogan has remained firm that this parliament will choose Turkey's next president and that the next parliamentary elections will occur on November 4, as scheduled. As long as the AKP retains its control over parliament and does not bleed internally, the opposition can do little beyond forays to harass and undermine AKP legitimacy. End Summary.

12. (C) Turkey's opposition parties are staging their latest push to thwart AKP plans to put Erdogan or another AKP leader in the presidential palace after President Sezer steps down in May 2007. In recent remarks, Sezer encouraged such a push. Reiterating their claim that the current AKP government, which won 34% of the vote in 2002, is not representative and should not choose the next president, opposition leaders tried this week to generate momentum for a parliamentary walk-out that would force early elections. A minimum of 28 deputies would need to resign to trigger this outcome. One deputy, an independent, pledged to resign after parliament concludes its budget debates next week.

13. (C) After spirited debate but little action, some opposition leaders today began backing off from the walk-out plan. MP resignations would need to be approved by a parliamentary majority, which is unlikely, given the AKP's control of 354 of 550 seats. Nor is it likely that the AKP will experience an exodus of deputies sufficient to turn the tide. PM Erdogan's hold on the party still appears strong, having weathered the challenge of moving Turkey's EU accession process forward without crossing any redlines on the Cyprus standoff. His government seems well-positioned to live up to the PM's pledge to see its five-year term through.

14. (C) Time is running out for the early election ploy to succeed; the opposition would have to galvanize around a plan

before mid-January or there would be insufficient time to organize an election and convene a new parliament before the May presidential election.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON